DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Geographic News Bulletin

This bulletin is issued weekly by the Department of the Interior. The information in it is obtained from the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY, Washington, D. C.

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THE RUINS OF A LIBRARY BUILDING 4,000 YEARS OLD: NIPPUR

This library yielded to the pick and shovel of the explorer thousands of tablets written in days antedating the era of Abraham. More than seven hundred contract tablets were discovered in one building at a depth of 20 feet below the surface. The great care with which they had been made, the exceptionally pure and soft clay chosen, and the large number of fine seal impressions exhibited by them attracted the attention of the decipherer at once. Upon closer examination, they proved to belong to the business archives of a great Babylonian firm, Murashu Sons, bankers and brokers at Nippur, who lived in the time of Artaxerxes I and Darius II. This banking-house was to the Persian kings what the house of Rothschilds has been to England and that of Morgan to the United States

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Cherso: May Be Helgoland of the Adriatic

THE Rapallo Agreement of November, 1920, which fixed the status of the troublesome city of Fiume and disposed of other moot points in regard to territory on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea, gave Italy an important foothold near Fiume in the obscure island of Cherso.

Practically unheard of on this side of the Atlantic, eluding most travelers, even escaping many of the seekers after the little-known places of Europe, Cherso neither is inaccessible nor unattractive.

It dangles like a pendant in the Gulf of Quarnero, low hung from the neck of Fiume. It is the Long Island of that port, its shore line rising twelve miles to the south. Its slender form extends to the southwest for forty miles, though it never exceeds seven miles in width, and its area is somewhat more than twice that of the District of Columbia.

Has Great Strategic Possibilities

Holding in mind this location, near the head of the Adriatic, in view of the tentative plans to make Fiume a buffer state between Italy and Jugo-Slavia, the strategic possibilities of Cherso become apparent. Indeed, one may picture it as a potential Helgoland of the Adriatic.

A natural curiosity of the island is Lake Vrana, or Crow's Lake, with a surface forty feet above the sea level, fed and drained by invisible streams. The island is rugged, with one mountain peak rising more than 2,000 feet above the Quarnero waters. Gibraltar-like rocks rise precipitously to a thousand feet along one of its shores. Here are the dome-like caverns of Smergo, now protected from the sea by a wave-built rock barrier.

The devastating Bora, which sweeps the Dalmatian coast, drips its salt spray over Cherso, excluding many varieties of plant life. The absence of large trees and scarcity of springs are two physical characteristics. In the north laurel and mastic grow, and vines and olive trees abound in the southern portion.

Was Part of Istria Under Austrian Regime

Politically, Cherso was included in Istria, when under Austrian rule. With its neighbor islands, Lussin, to the southwest, and Veglia, to the east, it was a part of the Lussin district.

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GROUP OF CZECH CHILDREN FROM HUMBLE HOMES. THE LITTLE GIRLS CHEERFULLY HELP THEIR MOTHERS, CARRYING HOME FODDER FOR THE CATTLE AND DOING CHORES

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Tabriz: Persia's Health Resort City

TABRIZ, Persia, from which American and other consular representatives recently were reported to have fled at the approach of Bolshevik forces, is one of the most important cities in Persia. Its population is about 200,000. Teheran, the capital, is the only place in the dominions of the Shah which exceeds it in size.

It is beautifully situated in a wide valley on the River Aji, which flows into the salt lake of Urumiah, 35 miles to the west. Although apparently surrounded by mountains, Tabriz has an elevation of more than 4,000 feet, and the climate in winter is extremely severe.

Name Means "Fever Destroying"

"Hundreds of springs and fountains water thousands of beautiful gardens in this ancient city which for centuries has enjoyed a deserved reputation as a health resort. Indeed, tradition says that the place was founded by Zobeideh, the wife of Harun al-Rashid, hero of the Arabian Nights. According to this legend, Zobeideh came here to recuperate from a fever in the year 791, and a cure was quickly effected, thanks to the salubrious climate, hence the name Tab (fever) riz (pourer away), or "fever destroying." As a matter of cold history, however, Tabriz was in existence four centuries before the birth of the beautiful Zobeideh.

Up to the time of the completion of a railway through the Caucasus and the improvement of transportation facilities on the Caspian Sea, Tabriz was the emporium of Persian trade with the West. Now, however, most of its trade has been diverted to Astara, on the Caspian, 150 miles to the east, and to Resht, 200 miles to the southeast.

Once City of Half Million

The Black Sea port of Batum lies to the northwest a distance of 360 miles.

There are few buildings of interest in Tabriz, for it has suffered from the rack of elements and the ruthlessness of many conquerors. It has been held at various times by the Arabs, the Seljuks, the Mongols, and the Turkomans. Persia took it from the Turkomans, but it is essentially a Turkish rather than a Persian city today, and Turkish is the prevailing language. At the beginning of the World War it was occupied by a Turkish army, but subsequently the Russian forces took possession.

Man has not played as great havoc with the buildings of Tabriz, however, as have earthquakes. It has been visited many times by quakes, the most disastrous being that of 1721, when more than 80,000 persons are said to have been killed. This disaster occurred at the height of the city's prosperity, for at about that time the population of the city is said to have reached 550,000.

Of the three hundred mosques of which the city boasts only one de-

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Cherso lies off the shores of the northern part of Dalmatia and the Croatian littoral, a region formerly known as Morlacchia. The Morlacchia channel preserves this name, originating with the Slavic invaders of Dalmatia, who called the Latinized people they found there Vlachs, or Mavro-Vlachs—Black Vlachs. Thus the Slavs of this region have come to be known, by a corruption of this title, as Morlachs.

In rural districts Morlachian women retain their historic costume, which includes a kerchief for the head, many strands of beads, a waistband from which hang amulets and various trinkets, and, over a blue cloth gown, an apron of exquisite embroidered pattern. About her neck an unmarried girl wears a string of coins and rings which comprise her dowry. Formerly the men wore their hair in a plait, which their wives were expected to comb, adorn with ribbons and charms, and anoint with fats.

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Digging Into History With Pick and Shovel

RECENT deciphering of a clay tablet which may add a thousand years to the span of recorded history—for it contains a code of laws said to antedate that of Hammurabi by a millennium—is another reminder that archeologists are finding stranger true stories than fiction can reveal.

The pick and the spade of the explorer have resulted in astounding revelations, says a communication to the National Geographic Society from Albert T. Clay, who has deciphered some of the most famous of the documents.

Above all else, one of the greatest surprises is that the earliest peoples, instead of being barbarous or uncultured, were civilized and possessed a culture of a high order.

Libraries Five Thousand Years Old

Several ancient libraries and immense archives have been found. Years ago the literary library of Ashurbanipal (668-626 B. C.) was discovered at Nineveh.

In more recent years temple and school libraries have been found at Nippur, Sippar, Larsa, Babylon, and Erech. The libraries of the first three sites belong chiefly to the third millennium B. C.; those of the last two belong to later periods.

But especially large archives of these documents, numbering several hundred thousand and belonging to the third and fourth millenniums B. C., have been found at Tello, Nippur, Drehem, Jokha, and recently at Ur.

A young man sends his endearing inquiry concerning the health of his beloved, saying, "To Bibea, thus says Gimil Marduk; may the gods Shamash and Marduk permit thee to live forever for my sake. I write to inquire concerning thy health. Tell me how thou art. I went to Babylon, but did not see thee. I was greatly disappointed. Send the reason for thy leaving, that I may be happy. Do come in the month Marchesvan. Keep well always for my sake."

Great-Grandfather of Modern Police Court

The Code of Hammurabi, written about 2000 B. C., upon a large and somewhat irregular stele, is perhaps the most important monument of

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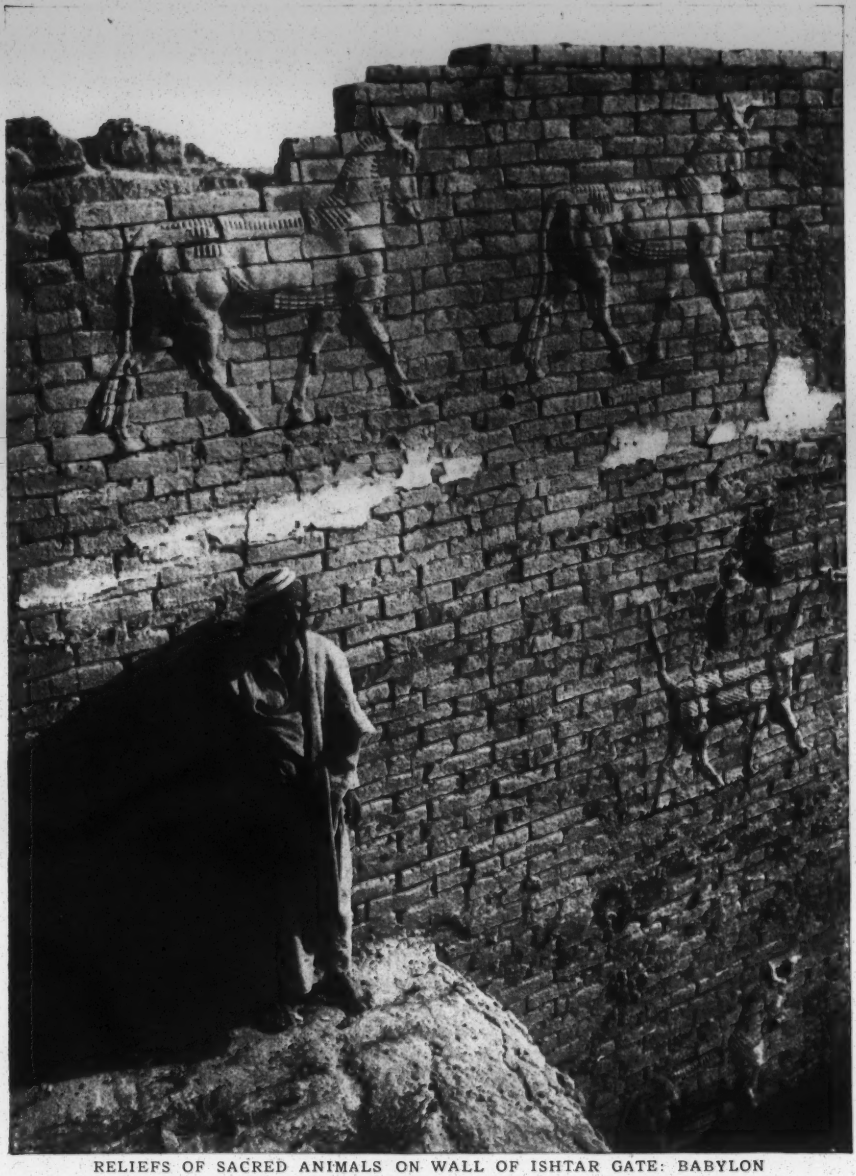
serves special mention. It is the famous Blue Mosque, so called because it is covered with blue tiles. It dates from the 15th century and is now in ruins. The ark, or citadel, is a brick building of massive walls with a tower 120 feet high.



RELIEFS OF SACRED ANIMALS ON WALL OF ISHTAR GATE: BABYLON

King Sargon, the gardener king, nearly 6,000 years ago, reviewed his reign much as a President of the United States does his administration in his farewell message. He calls attention to the fact that he restored and colonized ruined cities, that he made tracts of barren lands fertile, that he gave his nation a splendid system of irrigation works, that he protected the needy from want and the weak from oppression, filling the nation's granaries with corn, bringing down the high cost of living, and finding new markets

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Posen, Experiment Station For "Kultur"

THE province of Posen, formerly a part of Germany's eastern Prussia, and one of the most important fragments of old Poland, which has been incorporated in the new, war-born Poland, was the unhappy experiment station for some of Prussia's most vigorous and futile efforts to Germanize an alien population.

Until the northern portion of Posen fell to Prussia, after the first partition of Poland in 1772, and the remainder was annexed to Prussia 21 years later, Posen's history was blended with that of Poland. In connection with the first partition, it will be recalled that Frederick the Great adopted the ingenious scheme of surrounding those parts of Poland he desired with a military force, on the pretext that he was seeking to check the spread of a cattle disease.

Gnesen, early capital of Posen, 30 miles to the northeast of the city of Posen, was the residence of Boleslaus, so long as that restive warrior remained at his capital. There, in the year 1000, the Polish prince lavishly entertained Otto III, a "social lobby" effort so successful that Otto conferred upon Boleslaus the royal crown and made Gnesen seat of an archbishop. For more than 300 years Polish kings were crowned there.

Prosperity Aroused German Envy

After being bandied about for a brief period, Posen fell to Prussia again in 1815, and for more than half a century Germany paid little heed to it. After the division of the vast estates and other economic changes, Polish middle classes in Posen began to prosper, whereupon, toward the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Prussia began to take notice of its provincial "Topsy." Germans had been immigrating there since the thirteenth century and the newcomers, at first, were welcomed. Severance of Posen from Poland changed that feeling, though open friction was not generated until Prussia began her repressive measures.

Polish nobles had kept alive Polish traditions, but Prussia was more alarmed by the prosperity of the Poles than by what, today, might be called the nobles' propaganda. So she set about Germanizing Posen, both by colonization and by compulsion, much as she attempted to do to the French in Alsace.

Prussia's first move was to make German the language of the schools. Police were ordered to disperse meetings where Polish was spoken.

School Children's Strike Stirs World Interest

After sixteen years that program failed to make much of a Prussian impression upon Posen, so a commission was set up, in 1884, to buy land from

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antiquity that has been found for a century. It is the product of a civilization of a high order. In codifying his laws, Hammurabi arranged them in a definite and logical order, based upon accepted judicial decisions.

In no better way is it possible to become acquainted with the every-day life of the ancient Babylonian than by a careful study of the Hammurabi Code.

The Common Law of Babylonia

The code recognizes three grades of society—the aristocrat, or gentleman; the poor man, or pleb, and the slave. Among the ranks of the first mentioned were the professional men, the officers, and the tradesmen. The second class included the freedman who had been a slave.

It has been the custom with most peoples in a large part of the ancient, as well as the modern, Orient to base a betrothal upon an agreement of the man or his parents to pay a sum of money to the girl's father. In Babylonia this "bride money," together with the gift of the father and other gifts, formed the marriage portion which was given to the bride.

In case the girl's father rejected the suitor after the contract had been made, he was required to return double the amount of the bride price. The betrothals took place usually when the parties were young, and, as a rule, the engagements were made by the parents. If the father died before all the sons were married, when the estate was divided the sums needed for those not having wives were deducted before the distribution was made.

A marriage contract was necessary to make a marriage legal. In some of them peculiar conditions were made, such as the bride being required to wait upon the mother-in-law, or even upon another wife. If it was stipulated that the man should not take a second wife, the woman could secure a divorce in case her husband broke the agreement.

"Price Fixing" for Ancient Doctors

The Code of Hammurabi fixed the charges of physicians and surgeons. If a physician cured a broken limb or healed a diseased bowel, his fee from the gentry was fixed at five shekels; from the commoner, three, and from the slave, two. The surgeon for an operation upon the upper class received ten shekels; the lower, five, and a slave, two.

In order to discourage the surgeon from making rash operations, severe penalties were fixed in case of unsuccessful ones. If the patient died, the surgeon's hands were cut off. In the case of a slave, he had to replace him with one of equal value. If the slave's eye was lost, he had to pay half the value of the slave.

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The Czechs

RECENT dispatches, reporting attempted uprisings among the radical element in Czechoslovakia, and statements that a stronger and stronger enmity toward the German inhabitants is being shown on all sides by the Czechs and Slovaks, center interest once more on this newly created central European republic, carved after the war from Austria-Hungary. The Czechs are described in the following communication to the National Geographic Society from Professor Ales Hrdlicka:

"A 1,500-year-long life-and-death struggle with the German race, which surrounded them from the north, west, and south, with a near-burial within the Austrian Empire for the last three centuries, failed to destroy or break the spirit of the little nation of Czechs or Bohemians.

"The Czechs are now more numerous, more accomplished, more patriotic than ever before, and the day was inevitable when the shackles would fall and the nation take its place again at the council of free nations.

Nature Smiled on Home Land of Czechs

"They are the westernmost branch of the Slavs, their name being derived, according to tradition, from that of a noted ancestral chief. The term Bohemia was applied to the country probably during the Roman times and was derived, like that of Bavaria, from the Boii, who for some time before the Christian era occupied or claimed parts of these regions

"Nature has favored old Bohemia, the most important part of Czecho-Slovakia, perhaps more than any other part of Europe. Its soil is so fertile and climate so favorable that more than half of the country is cultivated and produces richly. In its mountains almost every useful metal and mineral, except salt, is to be found. It is the geographical center of the European continent, equally distant from the Baltic, Adriatic, and North Seas, and though inclosed by mountains, is so easily accessible, because of the valleys of the Danube and the Elbe rivers, that it has served in history as the avenue of many armies.

"Besides Bohemia, the Czechs occupy Moravia and adjacent territory in Silesia, both formerly parts of Austria-Hungary. The Slovaks, who show merely dialectic differences from the Czechs, extend from Moravia eastward over most of what was formerly northern Hungary.

A Lover of Life

"The Czech is kind and with a stock of native humor. He is musical, loves songs, poetry, art, nature, fellowship, the other sex. He is an intent thinker and restless seeker of truth, of learning, but no apt schemer. He is ambitious and covetous of freedom in the broadest sense, but tendencies to domineering, oppression, power by force over others, are foreign to his nature.

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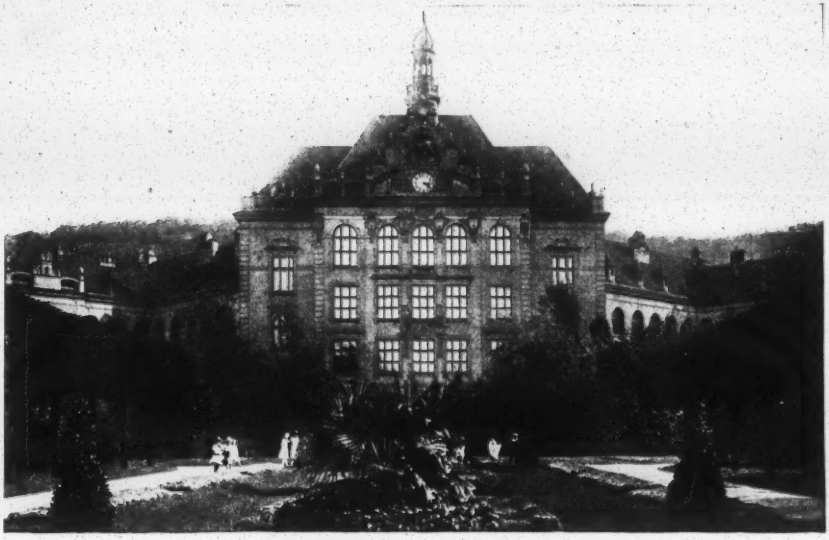
the Poles for German settlement. Before the failure of this policy was openly admitted the original appropriation of 100,000,000 marks was supplemented again and again until, in fifteen years, more than half of Posen had been bought for German colonists. Still the Poles predominated. More kept coming from Poland and opposition to the German program was intensified as the measures became harsher.

Even Germany was scandalized when, in 1902, it was brought to light in the Prussian parliament that pupils had been whipped by the wholesale for declining to say the Lord's Prayer in German. But the opposition of the grown-ups did not cause the world-wide interest aroused by the school children's strike in 1906, when about 100,000 Polish pupils took that means of protesting against being beaten when they would not answer questions in German. The Prussian government refused to accede to the request of the archbishop of Posen that children be permitted to receive religious instruction in Polish. Parents who withdrew them from school were imprisoned.

Persecutions Bordered on Absurd

Efforts to absorb or crowd out the Poles by German colonization having failed, a measure was passed for the expropriation of Polish land. Further laws were enacted compelling wider use of the German language. Then came the Kattowitz incident, in 1910, crowning a series of petty persecutions which bordered on the absurd, wherein a number of minor officials who had voted for Poles at a municipal election were removed from office.

Posen is smaller, territorially, than Maryland, but had half a million more population in 1910. About a million Poles—more than half the total population in Posen—were established there before the World War. Posen has mineral deposits of lignite and salt. Much of its land was tilled. Its manufactured products, besides those of its breweries and distilleries, were sugar, cloth, tobacco, bricks, and machinery.



A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN PRAGUE, BOHEMIA

The Czech philosopher Comenius, who lived during the seventeenth century, the bloodiest of all centuries excepting our own, urged that all children, rich and poor, should be taught to read and write. His teachings were in part responsible for the compulsory education of all American children early enforced by American colonists

He ardently searches for God and is inclined to be deeply religious, but is impatient of dogma, as of all other undue restraint. He may be opinionated, stubborn, but is happy to accept facts and recognize true superiority. He is easily hurt and does not forget the injury; will fight, but is not lastingly revengeful or vicious. He is not cold, calculating, thin-lipped, nor again as inflammable as the Pole or the southern Slav, but is sympathetic and full of trust and through this often open to imposition.

Fought Unwillingly for Austria

"His endurance and bravery in war for a cause which he approved were proverbial, as was also his hospitality in peace.

"He is often highly capable in languages, science, literary and technical education, and is inventive as well as industrial, but not commercial. Imaginative, artistic, creative, rather than frigidly practical. Inclined at times to melancholy, brooding, pessimism, he is yet deep at heart forever buoyant, optimistic, hopeful—hopeful not of possessions, however, but of human happiness, and of the freedom and future golden age of not merely his own, but all people.

"The Czechs and Slovaks in Austria-Hungary fought only under compulsion; their unwilling regiments were decimated; their political and national leaders filled the Austrian and Hungarian prisons. Thousands of Bohemian and Slovak volunteers fought enthusiastically under the banners of France and Great Britain, and there were whole regiments of them attached to the Russian army."

SCENE IN A PERSIAN BAZAAR